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and English contemporaries, the Italian writers of romance leave upon our minds a profound conviction that they give the truth of history. The brilliant feuilletons of M. Dumas and the ponderous delineations of Mr. James have added very little to correct knowledge of France and its people in the middle centuries. But an American reader may get from "The Betrothed" and from "Florence Betrayed" a more exact idea of Italian life and manners than he will derive from any other source.

2. — *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah.*

By RICHARD F. BURTON, Lieut. Bombay Army. With an Introduction by BAYARD TAYLOR. New York: G. P. Putnam & Co. 1856. 12mo. pp. 492.

If a novel subject, a graceful style, graphic descriptions of scenery, faithful delineations of life and manners, adorned by various learning and infused with refined humor, can give merit and attractiveness to a volume of travels, the volume before us will be entitled to the highest rank. Its subject is not only novel, but unique. But one traveller within the memory of the living has anticipated Lieutenant Burton in a narrative of pilgrimage to the holy cities of Islam; and the work of Bureckhardt, published forty years ago, has long been out of print, and is found in few libraries. Mr. Burton's account is substantially the first, as it is certainly the best, account of the Hejaz and its cities that has appeared in an English dress. It does for Arabia what Dr. Barth's book does for the interior of Africa, and Huc's book for Thibet and China, — opens to our familiar knowledge a prohibited region. After reading this narrative, we seem to be as well acquainted with the Moslem Canaan as with that Jewish and Christian Sacred Land which dozens of new itineraries annually illustrate. There seems to be nothing omitted in the story, nothing left for future travellers to tell.

Only a successful issue could justify such a daring adventure as this which Mr. Burton relates. For a Christian to assume a Moslem disguise, and to pass himself off as a believer in the Prophet, is as difficult as for the Ethiopian to change his skin or the leopard his spots. Not one man in a myriad would be equal to such an elaborate and complicated stratagem. The deception must be all but a change of nature. Dress, language, posture, movement, temperament, tastes, must all be altered. The method of walking, of drinking, of talking and listening,

of performing the simplest offices, must be carefully attended to. A slight mistake in returning a salutation might destroy the whole scheme. A blunder in some religious prostration might spoil the disguise. The chances against success were a thousand to one. And in case of discovery, the chances of instant death were almost in the same proportion. It was an immense risk for any man to run, requiring an ingenuity, a patience, a fertility of invention, and an abundance of resources, which very few men in the world are fortunate enough to possess.

Mr. Burton is one of those few. His habits, his associations, his physical peculiarities, and his rare ability, gave him a presumption of success. He had lived long enough in India to acquire the knowledge of several Oriental tongues, Arabic with the rest, and to learn the religious doctrines and legends of that land. He had travelled enough to submit to disasters, to bear fatigues, and to be ready for emergencies. His voyage to Egypt in an Oriental dress had proved that he was enough of a Persian to baffle the scrutiny of brother Englishmen; and before he left Cairo with the train of "Haji" he had established a good believer's character. The narrative of this process of making an orthodox Moslem out of a cunning English officer is very entertaining. It will not, however, entice many to a similar experiment. The probation is worse than a conventional novitiate. Life in the "Wakálah," and duty in the mosque, are a trifle worse than the hardest Carmelite austeries. The ardor for pilgrimage will be dampened by the preliminaries at Alexandria and Cairo. And the imitator of Mr. Burton, detected at El Ashar in some false quantity or some infidel gesture, will curse his hard luck, tear off his borrowed robes, and take a donkey to "Shepherd's," hiding there his mortification in a cloud of Latakia with a glass of English ale. Mr. Burton himself advises against the expedition which he by a lucky chance carried through. Yet we have no doubt that his book will set many enthusiasts on the route for Meccah, just as every narrative of whaling or discovery sends boys to sea.

So complete was Mr. Burton's disguise, that he was only once suspected of being an impostor, and then his wit instantly silenced the suspicion. A harder ordeal never man had to pass. The trial of a voyage down the Red Sea without chart or compass in that wretched shallop, with those piles of filthy and villainous fanatics, crowding, fighting, swearing, must have been appalling in the last degree. The comforts of a residence at Shaykh Hamed's house at El Medinah were balanced by the constant danger of detection. Hard fare was safer than good living. But Mr. Burton went through it all, saw everything, joined in everything, performed all the pious and some of the profane

work, and has made such a statement of it as no future adventurer will surpass. Mr. Taylor says that "we could have desired more ample pictures of the scenery through which he passed." We submit that Mr. Taylor in none of his travels has given more truthful pictures of scenery than those of this volume. The fancy of an imaginative writer sometimes "amplifies." Mr. Burton states facts and realities as he *saw* them, not as he imagined them.

Even where he treats of topics which other writers have treated, his superior observation and skill are manifest. No writer has described Cairo so faithfully. No writer has given such a daguerreotype of desert life. The chapter on the "Bedouins of El Hejaz" is a masterpiece of acute and original remark. The picture of the caravan on its march is a splendid piece of word-painting. The erudition of the notes, which draw us somewhat too frequently off from the text, is most curious and copious. And throughout the volume there is a tone of honesty and candor, and a spirit of scientific enthusiasm, which make us forget that it is a story of trickery and fraud.

We ought to add, that the American reprint is elegantly executed.

3.—*A Threefold Test of Modern Spiritualism.* By WILLIAM R. GORDON, D. D. New York: C. Scribner. 1856. 12mo. pp. 408.

DR. GORDON's book is earnest in its spirit, ingenious in its argument, and clear in its style. Its literary faults are those of too frequent repetition and the multiplication of needless details. It might be abridged one half, without injury to its logic, and much to the comfort of its readers. We go for the homoeopathic practice in "spiritual" matters, and dread, above all things, large doses of "spiritual" bitters. Dr. Gordon has sinned in this regard, though his purpose is benevolent. He has treated us to more nonsense than an ordinary digestion can bear; and many, before they have finished his first test, will throw down the book in satiety of disgust.

Dr. Gordon's theory of the heterogeneous phenomena which are raked and piled together under the general name of "spiritualism," is that they are caused, barring a respectable share of imposture, by *real spirits*, genuine, disembodied, intelligent agents; and so far he agrees with Messrs. Hare, Edmonds, Tallmadge, and the host of minor apostles of the new gospel. But he takes deadly issue with these gentlemen in affirming those spirits to be *demons*, imps of Satan, inveterate liars, malignant fiends. He is not the first who has